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#### Media Release

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#### **Markell, Biden, State and local law enforcement officials, and legislators join together in the fight against prescription drug abuse**

*29 Delaware drop-off sites offered on April 30 for National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day*

**Dover** – Governor Jack Markell, Attorney General Beau Biden, regional Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent in Charge John Bryfonski, Health and Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf, Deputy Secretary of State James Collins, Deputy Secretary of Safety and Homeland Security Elizabeth Olsen, legislators, and Delaware police chiefs held a press conference in Dover today to bring statewide focus to the issue of escalating prescription drug abuse. The officials also announced that on April 30<sup>th</sup>, Delaware will participate in the DEA's National Take-Back Day by providing multiple sites throughout the state where people can discard unused, unwanted, or expired prescription and over-the-counter medications.

"This effort prevents medication abuse and theft and helps keep chemicals out of our water systems," said Governor Jack Markell. "We want to give people an opportunity to properly dispose of their old or unwanted medicines. My message to Delawareans is simple: clean out your medicine cabinet and bring your old prescriptions to a drop off site near you on April 30<sup>th</sup>."

"Prescription drug abuse devastates families, and it's on the rise," Attorney General Biden said, noting that in 2007 there were more deaths nationwide from overdosing on prescription painkillers than heroin and cocaine combined. "We're acting to make people aware of the grave consequences of prescription drug abuse, and we are committed to continuing to work with law enforcement, healthcare, and other government agencies to fight this problem at its source – access to drugs."

"This is a great opportunity for people throughout Delaware to build upon the outstanding success of the first ever National Take-Back Initiative in September 2010," said John J. Bryfonski, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Philadelphia Division. "Educating the public about the dangers of allowing pharmaceuticals to languish in our medicine cabinets where they can easily fall into the wrong hands and lead to tragedy instead of healing is one way the Drug Enforcement Administration can effectively participate in this important initiative. This is also an environmentally sound way to dispose of these prescription drugs

and chemicals without polluting our nation's water supply.”

Prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States, second only to marijuana use as the most common form of drug abuse. Most prescription drugs used for non-medical purposes are obtained from friends, family members, or the home medicine cabinet. National Take-Back Day coordinates the effort to provide a safe and easy way to dispose of these medications, since throwing the substances away provides an easy source of drugs for those who would abuse or sell them, and flushing drugs can result in water contamination.

Drop-off sites are located statewide, and the process is free and anonymous. Note:

- Prescription and over-the-counter solid dosage medications (i.e. tablets and capsules) are accepted.
- Intravenous solutions, injectables and needles will not be accepted.
- Illicit substances such as marijuana and methamphetamine are not part of the program.

“Studies show that pharmaceuticals are present in bodies of water across the country,” said Rita M. Landgraf, Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services. “In addition to antibiotics and steroids, over 100 individual medications have been identified in environmental samples and drinking water in just the past three years. While current levels of pharmaceuticals in Delaware’s drinking water are far below harmful levels, we should all take an active role in properly disposing of medications.”

The best way to ensure that our waterways are drinkable, fishable, and swimmable is to prevent pollution from entering our rivers and streams in the first place,” said Colin O’Mara, Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. “This program will remove hundreds of pounds of pharmaceuticals from causing adverse impacts on our environment and fisheries.”

“Our law enforcement officers are seeing an increasing number of prescription medications within the illegal drug trade,” said Elizabeth Y. Olsen, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Safety and Homeland Security. “Providing our citizens a way to safely dispose of leftover prescriptions reduces the likelihood that these drugs will be sold illegally in communities and on our streets.”

“This month’s take-back events are part of our overall strategy for combating prescription drug abuse,” said Deputy Secretary of State James Collins, whose agency has led an ongoing effort to curb the diversion of prescription drugs to illegal uses through doctors’ offices and pharmacies.

State and local police agencies, the Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, pharmacies, educational institutions, and retirement communities have teamed up to host 29 drop-off sites statewide on April 30. Consumers can find a collection site near them by visiting [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov) and click on “Got Drugs,” or call 1-800-882-9539. Last fall, Americans turned in 121 tons (242,000 lbs.) of drugs during the inaugural National Take-Back Day that could have otherwise led to accidental poisoning, overdose, or abuse.

In addition to announcing the drug take-back events, the officials also highlighted other actions have been taken to address the problem of prescription drug abuse. These include the establishment of a drug prescription monitoring program to prevent “doctor shopping”, the institution of statewide tamper-proof prescription pads, and a recent regulatory change permitting the e-prescribing of controlled substances to further reduce the possibility of prescription tampering by allowing for physicians to submit prescriptions directly to pharmacies.

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